



2004 Report to the 42nd District

Spring 2004

Kelli Linville

State Representative
42nd District

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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for allowing me to represent the interests of our community during the 2004 Legislative Session. I heard from many of you and want to extend my appreciation for taking the time to share your thoughts, ideas and concerns as I worked for legislation to bring viable jobs to Whatcom County, provide better schools for our children and offer affordable health care to families.

As session began, I sent a newsletter outlining my goals for the 2004 Legislative Session to secure good-paying jobs for Whatcom County residents, reform unbalanced clean water regulations and strengthen educational opportunities for all students. I am pleased to report back to you that in the short 60-day session, I was able to make progress on these three goals.

Please feel free to contact my local district office to ask questions, share ideas, or voice any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Kelli Linville
42nd District



Representative Kelli Linville

CREATING GOOD JOBS AND BUILDING A STRONGER ECONOMY

My top priority this year was securing good jobs for citizens in Whatcom County. I am pleased to report that our district received a boost when the Legislature passed a bill with strong bipartisan support to give a temporary tax break to aluminum smelters until electricity prices go down in 2006.



This will keep hundreds of people employed at the Alcoa Intalco Works aluminum smelter in Ferndale. As a strong proponent of performance-based measures, I was pleased to vote **YES** on this bill and even more pleased to join Governor Locke and Intalco employees in Ferndale as this legislation was signed into law.

Over the years, many business people have told me how difficult it is for them to deal

with state agencies. I voted **YES** to allow people who live or have a business in Whatcom County to petition state agency decisions in either Whatcom or Thurston County Superior Court. Why should people have to go to Olympia when they can appeal state rules in Bellingham?

The Legislature passed a compromise measure that will protect patients' rights to see alternative providers such as naturopaths, chiropractors and acupuncturists while allowing insurance companies to offer a more affordable package of benefits to small businesses and their employees. I hope this measure will reduce costs for small businesses and employees and encourage more insurance companies to compete for their business.

My constituents said, "**No new taxes!**" and I agreed. I voted **YES** on the 2004 supplemental budget, which made small

adjustments—less than one percent of the total biennial budget—and restored some of the deep cuts in the safety net made last year, with no new taxes and a \$300 million reserve.

I worked with diverse organizations such as the Audubon Society, Western Washington University, Washington State Association for Community Action and the Association of Washington Business on continuing the **Priorities of Government** approach implemented by the Governor during last year's budget process. I introduced a bill to make sure we continue this approach. **In this time of budget shortfalls, we must put your dollars to use where they are needed most.**

INVESTING IN EDUCATION:

UNLOCKING THE DOOR TO OUR SUCCESS

The Legislature put construction dollars into projects creating more jobs and long-term opportunities for Whatcom County.

- Bellingham Technical College can build an automotive repair and welding instructional building, thanks to over \$14 million from the supplemental budget.
- Western Washington University received \$4.9 million to remove hazardous asbestos and make other renovations to the classrooms in Bond Hall.

These projects mean a greater opportunity for worker training and re-training, which is a key recommendation to improve Washington's business climate.



The budget addressed the rising need for more slots in higher education. It's absolutely necessary to open up the doors of our technical and community colleges and universities to more students and give them the opportunity to compete for 21st century jobs. In our district, Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom Community College will all receive the benefits of these increases both in general enrollment and in high-demand fields like engineering and nursing.

A Report to the 42nd District

I voted **YES** on reforms to our education system that will improve the chances for success of many kids. Three of the reforms passed include:

- Allowing retakes and alternative assessments on the WASL exam, to help students who struggle with tests meet our state's high education standards
- Re-focusing Learning Assistance Program money for low-income schools, so those schools don't lose funding when their students get better scores
- Empowering educators to address individual needs of their students in their schools

HEALTH CARE REFORMS

I am very disappointed that we were unable to take any significant steps forward to make liability insurance for doctors available and affordable here in Whatcom County. My approach to legislating has always been to identify the problem and all the causes and work with others to make progress toward a solution that works.



I believe that we could have made significant progress this year, despite the fact that legislation to cap jury awards did not have the two-thirds vote of Legislature necessary to change our constitution. **I'm pleased**

that we did make some strides in health care reform.
We:

- Granted immunity from civil liability to more volunteer licensed health care workers in nonprofit community clinics and hospitals.
- Paid for liability insurance for retired primary care providers who volunteer their services for free in low-income clinics and hospitals. These retired doctors help patients in communities throughout the state.
- Eliminated Medicare premiums for many kids from low-income families.
- Provided nearly \$20 million to hospitals and clinics so they can continue serving those with no medical coverage.

I worked hard to have the civil liability bill heard in the House, and I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my

commitment on this issue. I look forward to participating in more discussions and taking **a fresh look at tort reform**. I know that the Legislature's failure to act on liability reform is hurting both providers and patients in our community.

PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR STRONGER AGRICULTURE

Our state faced a crisis when **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy** (BSE or "mad cow disease") was discovered in a dairy cow near Yakima last year. As Chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I had first-hand contact with agency personnel and stakeholder groups as we worked to develop legislation to protect human and animal health and maintain a strong agriculture industry for our state.

We passed legislation to:

- Ban the transport, sale and use of "downer" cows. Downer cows are animals that can't move, due to disease or other reasons. (SHB 2802)
- Give the director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) the ability to quarantine, inspect and destroy diseased animals if necessary. (SSB 6107)
- Direct the WSDA to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements for animal identification needed to trace the source of livestock for disease control and response. (SHB 2299)
- Suspend the B&O tax on processing and selling perishable meat until Japan, Mexico, and the Republic of Korea lift import bans on beef and beef products. (SHB 2929)

Washington is known around the world for growing excellent fruit and grain, running world-class dairies and ranches and producing delicious food and award-winning wines. The Legislature implemented the "**From the Heart of Washington**" program to help farmers and ranchers sell their goods. I sponsored the bill which moves this program into a nonprofit corporation, giving it flexibility to grow and accept grants.



Representative Kelli Linville

THE NEEDS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our state's environmental policies must balance the needs of people, fish and wildlife and communities. Last session, I successfully pursued that middle ground in reforming state water laws. This year, we added to that success.

Stormwater pollution, drainage and runoff in industrial and construction sites which can carry toxic chemicals, fuels, and other metals and dirt, is responsible for about a third of Washington's violations of the federal Clean Water Act.

I negotiated with the Department of Ecology (DOE), and business and environmental communities to implement legislation that addresses Washington's compliance with the Clean Water Act and settled a lengthy lawsuit concerning water pollution.

Business must use best management practices to clean up their runoff. Standards are also set for the amount of pollution in the water, and money from permits is earmarked for DOE to increase the number of inspectors checking pollution levels.

Water rules, including determining the proper amount of water that should flow through out key rivers and tributaries, remain a priority for me. I worked to negotiate new rules that would help us better manage our water resources. I also supported a new system that would require DOE to manage "wet" water rather than water rights on paper. Although legislation was not passed this year, the budget we passed does include money for the Department of Ecology to set

instream flows and examine water management in other states.

We must remove toxins and poisons from our water supply. I worked diligently to restore money in the budget to remove

some toxic chemicals from the water including PBTs, create a plan to reduce mercury and address health threats from flame retardants thought to slow brain development (PBDEs).



WORK FOR THE FUTURE

I plan to reintroduce the successful **Priorities of Government** budgeting approach until it becomes the way we do business in Olympia.

Education should be one of the top priorities, so we need to have a full understanding of the way money is used in our public school system. I'm part of a group to study the financing of the K-12 schools, and I hope we can find smart reforms to help our students and educators succeed.

I'm pleased with the progress on **water law reforms**, but we must find even-handed, fair water solutions for people, farms and fish.

Affordable and available health care, a major concern for individuals and businesses, will continue to be a priority in my work.

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